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ABSTRACT

From 1917 to 1962, the West Indian islands of Trinidad and Tobago reflected and influenced changes in their social, economic, and political systems. Prior to World War I, education in the islands reflected two diverse cultural traditions. One system offered a classical education which promoted economic and political supremacy of the white upper classes. The other system offered basic literacy education to Indians and Negroes. Pressure mounted slowly to adapt education to the needs of the islands. After World War I, a job-hungary native population demanded that schooling prepare them for profitable occupations. These demands resulted in improvements in technical and agricultural education which in turn produced an able and literate body of workers. This new economic and political elite demanded further educational and constitutional reforms. By the 1940s, considerable progress had been made in political consciousness and representation, and in opposition to colonial (British) power. It was not until the 1950s, however, that demands for self-government, universal literacy, and improved education on all levels were seriously considered by the British government. By 1960, large numbers of primary and secondary schools had been built, full secondary education was introduced, and adult and higher education programs were expanded. (DB)

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EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TRINDAD AND TOBAGO, 1917 - 1962

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

S. Macpherson Pemberton

February, 1979

PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to show that educational progress in Trinidad and Tobago has been accompanied by political and constitutional developments. An attempt will be made to incorporate the economic basis of these developments particularly after World War II. The period under review is 1917-1962.

The paper will consist of two parts. The first part will deal with social and political developments in the period between World War I and 1940. It will be shown how advances in education resulted in economic progress, and consequently a destruction of the status quo. The social class structure being erupted, a new economic and political elite came to power and demanded constitutional reforms. As the economy improved, a feeling of economic independence engendered a desire for political independence. The second part of the paper will discuss further developments along these lines in the period after 1940.

It is hoped that this paper will succeed in showing the close relationship between education and political consciousness in Trinidad and Tobago in the years following World War I.

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CHAPTER I

BETWEEN WORLD WARS

The island of Trinidad, in the West Indies, is approximately 2000 square miles in area and lies off the coast of Venezuela in South America. It was discovered by Christopher Columbus on May 30, 1498. After three hundred years of Spanish rule it passed into British hands. On February 18, 1797, the Spanish governor surrendered to a British naval expedition, and the island was formally ceded to Britain in 1802. The island of Tobago which is in close proximity to Trinidad was ceded to the British by the French by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Tobago was amalgamated with Trinidad in 1889 and in 1899 it became a ward of the united colony of Trinidad and Tobago.

Like the other colonies in the British West Indies the early history of Trinidad is a record of several attempts to establish white communities which would be a microcosm of the bigger community in England. For a long time the whites dominated although they were in the minority. This they did with relative ease during the period of slavery for then there were only two social classes--the upper and lower classes. With the abolition of slavery in 1834 a change in the social structure was gradually effected. Many of the

Negroes formed a new labouring class and some in time moved into the middle class. These classes were augmented by the immigration of East Indians to the West Indies. By 1872 nearly 150,000 Indians had arrived in the West Indies, of whom 44,000 went to Trinidad.[1] East Indian immigration ceased in 1917.

By 1917 the social structure in Trinidad was well marked by four classes: the upper or wealthy class, the middle class, the labouring or working class and the lower or poorer class. The first largely consisted of a white minority. Many of them were wealthy planters who owned much land. Others held lucrative positions in the civil service. The white section of the population was quite small when compared with other groups, as the population figures for 1944 reveal. In that year the total population of Trinidad was 557,970 of which white descent numbered 15,283 or 2.7 per cent, African descent numbered 261,485 or 46.9 per cent, and East Indians 195,747 or 35.1 per cent.[2]

While a few coloured West Indians gradually entered the upper classes, white dominance prevailed. This was true in all the islands. George Cumper noted that according to

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[1]Sir Alan Burns, History of the British West Indies (London, 1954), p. 56, from The British Overseas (1950) by C. E. Carrington, pp. 512-513.

[2]Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Digest, No. 5, 1955 (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 13.

the 1946 population census for the Leeward Islands, 33 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women in the white group occupied professional or public service and clerical work as compared with 16 per cent of men and 12 per cent of women in the coloured group.[3]

The upper classes had geared the system of education to their social and economic ends. They got the best education and consequently the best jobs. The curriculum in the secondary schools was classical, intended to prepare a small number of students for the civil service and the professions. In his evidence to the Trinidad Education Commission in 1916, the Principal of the Queen's Royal College stated that "the curriculum had been drawn up to meet the needs of a small number of clever boys rather than those of the majority of the pupils."[4] Nor did the situation change very much during the next two decades. Secondary education was also very expensive and therefore only children from wealthy families could attend. In 1933 the Marriott-Mayhew Education Report noted that "for the islands as a whole, the percentage of population taking secondary school

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[3]George Cumper, "The Social Structure of the British Caribbean," in Caribbean Affairs, ed. Philip Sherlock (The Extra-Mural Department, University College of the West Indies, 1950), pp. 27-28.

[4]Trinidad Education Commission Report, 1916 as quoted by Shirley Gordon, A Century of West Indian Education (London: Longman's, Green and Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 268.

courses is only .34, and in no island is it more than 1.0."[5]

Political and constitutional arrangements also facilitated the supremacy of the white minority. The social contacts of high officials from abroad were mainly with wealthy white residents. The Government was largely composed of lawyers, merchants, shippers, bankers and planters most of whom were white. For some time the system of government was, as Lloyd Braithwaite correctly observed, "one of complete autocracy through a semi-representative system."[6]

The first legislature in Trinidad, the Council of Government was established in 1831. In 1880 a Legislative Council was introduced but this was wholly nominated. Jamaica's example in 1884 of including elected members in the legislature was not to be carried out in Trinidad until forty years after. In 1889 the system of assigning the unofficial members to represent the counties was adopted in an attempt to have all parts of the colony represented. The Secretary of State in 1898 gave orders to discontinue that arrangement. By that time there were twenty-one members on

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[5]Marriott-Mayhew Report, 1933, as quoted by Gordon, op. cit., p. 270.

[6]Lloyd Braithwaite, "Social Stratification in Trinidad," Social and Economic Studies (Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College of the West Indies, 1953), Vol. II, Nos. 2 and 3, H. I. Huggins, Editor, p. 38.

the Council, ten official members including the governor and eleven unofficial members. The number of official members was increased by one, and the Governor's double vote ensured the officials of a majority of one. It was not until 1925 that the elective system was introduced and even then only on a very restricted suffrage.

Demands for constitutional change were made from time to time, but these were quickened after World War I. It is important to note the association of educational progress with these demands. Hewan Craig observed:

> When the demand for constitutional change was renewed shortly after the 1914-18 War, it differed significantly in its origins from the similar demand made at frequent intervals during the previous century. With the spread of education a coloured and black professional middle class was coming into being, and it was this class which now desired constitutional change.[7]

Great interest in education was exhibited as the nineteenth century drew to a close. The last decade of that century showed a marked increase in school attendance. In 1888 there were 15,969 children enrolled in the primary schools, and the average attendance was 11,000. By 1898 the number on roll rose to 24,866 and the average attendance to 15,817.[8] The trend of general progress in education was

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[7]Hewan Craig, The Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1952), p. 28.

[8]Trinidad and Tobago, Council Paper No. 67 of 1939, Education Administration Report of the Director of Education for the Year 1938 (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 7.

sustained and enhanced throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Education Commission of 1916 recommended that Government Schools should be established in new districts. The Education Ordinance of 1918 was passed "to make better provision for Education."[9] In 1921 a Compulsory Education Ordinance sought to enforce school attendance. Teachers' salaries were increased in 1923.

These efforts resulted in a record of educational progress shown by the increase of literacy. Out of a total population of 333,552 in 1911, 139,053 could read and write. In 1921 the number of literate persons had increased to 172,617.[10] Educational changes were largely effected in the Negro population. For although the East Indians formed about 33 per cent of the population the great majority of them were illiterate. Hewan Craig observed:

> In Trinidad the superior educational advantages of the Negro . . . enabled him to gain some political advantage over the Indian, and the challenge to white political supremacy in Trinidad has come from the Negro rather than from the Indian.[11]

Major E. Wood, Undersecretary of State for the colonies in 1922 noted in his report:

> Education is rapidly spreading, and tending to produce a coloured and black intelligentsia, of which the

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[9] Ibid., p. 9.

[10] Annual Statistical Digest, No. 5, 1955, loc. cit.

[11] Craig, op. cit., p. 91.

> members are quick to absorb elements of knowledge requisite for entry into learned professions and . . . ready to devote time and energy to propaganda among their own people.[12]

Education directly and indirectly was the means whereby the economic and political supremacy of the white upper class could be penetrated. Directly education was bound to produce a more intelligent and enlightened electorate. For the situation although much improved by 1921 was still bad. In that year 43 per cent of all persons over five years of age in Trinidad were illiterate.[13] And this was crucial to the coloured classes since literacy tests were employed in voting. Indirectly education would enable the coloured classes to enter the learned and business professions and vocations thus improving their chances to meet the property or income qualifications for voters as well as the financial qualifications for elected members of the Council.

One of the first political leaders in Trinidad to envision the important role of education in upsetting the status quo was Captain Arthur Cipriani. He was a white man, became President of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association in 1919, and the first man to represent the Negro labourer politically in Trinidad. In a speech delivered at the West Indian Conference held in Dominica in October, 1932, he

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[12]Wood Report, 1922, as quoted by Gordon, op. cit., p. 61.

[13]Annual Statistical Digest, No. 5, 1955, loc. cit.

appealed to the sentiments of the working classes:

> Working men and women, I say tonight your greatest asset lies in education, and you must struggle and fight on and on, . . . until your children enjoy the same privileges of education in your schools as the children of the multi-millionaires.[14]

It gradually came to be realized that education should be adapted to the needs of the island. This necessitated emphasis on vocational education as well as on general education. In the past the people had come to accept as good education only the literary or classical type which prepared their children for white collar jobs. They looked down on agricultural and technical education. Agricultural education they associated with farm labour and many of them remembered too well the accounts of the days of slavery. They tended to associate technical education with the system of apprenticeship which followed slavery, or with the industrial schools for pauper children in the nineteenth century.

With time, however, a job-hungry population attacked schooling not only as insufficient but unrealistic in that curricula was too bookish and did not prepare them enough for profitable occupations. Consequently, agricultural and scientific studies were emphasized at all levels of instruction, for Trinidad, like the other islands in the British West Indies is highly dependent on agriculture. The

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[14]Captain Arthur Cipriani, Speech at West Indian Conference at Dominica, 1932, as quoted by Gordon, op. cit., p. 165.

Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was established in 1922. Major Wood commented:

> I attach the highest possible importance to the new Agricultural College in Trinidad. It is impossible for any industry to compete successfully in the modern world unless it has an easy access to the best scientific advice.[15]

The oil industry also gave impetus to technical education in Trinidad. Pressure for such education was exercised from the bottom as well as from the top. Those in charge of industries felt the absolute need of trained technicians, while unskilled workers became aware of the fact that they could increase their earning power through proper training. This important development was recognized by the West Indian National Party in 1943 as it declared one of its aims to be "free education in the Modern Secondary and Technical Schools in all populous areas."[16] The Modern Secondary School with a vocational as well as a cultural basis of general education "directed essentially to the stimulation of interest in the pupil's social and industrial environment,"[17] was recommended by the Commissioners Marriott and Mayhew in their 1933 Education Report.

Special notice should be made of the decision of the

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[15]Wood Report, 1922, as quoted by Gordon, op. cit., p. 291.

[16]The West Indian National Party, Statement of Policy, Programme and Constitution (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, 1943), p. 5.

[17]Education Report for the Year 1938, op. cit., p. 47.

West Indian National Party to have technical schools in populous areas. These included Port-of-Spain, San Fernando and Point-a-Pierre. Industrial development proceeded apace in these areas, and training facilities for technical education were provided by the oil companies. Education and industry joined hands. A new Trade School at Pointe-a-Pierre and a Junior Technical School at San Fernando were established during 1946-48.[18] These schools had great economic consequences.

Economic betterment for the mass of the people was therefore sought through education on two fronts--the drive against illiteracy and emphasis on vocational education. The government and people were so enthusiastic to spread literacy that in addition to large increases in educational expenditure, they adopted the slogan "each one, teach one." Between 1938 to 1941 the gross total expenditure on education in Trinidad rose from $1,114,013.57 to $1,447,036.88,[19] representing an increase of $333,019.31. These efforts were not in vain. The illiteracy rate had fallen from 43 per cent in 1921, 36 per cent in 1931, to 22.6 per cent in 1946.[20]

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[18] Caribbean Commission, Caribbean Economic Review (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Guardian Commercial Printery, 1949), Vol. I, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 112-113.

[19] Education Report for the Year 1941, op. cit., p. 2.

[20] Annual Statistical Digest, No. 5, 1955, loc. cit.

This was a marked improvement in the situation at the close of the nineteenth century. According to H. V. Wiseman, "the 1891 census disclosed that about half the West Indian population over the age of five could neither read nor write."[21] In 1883, out of 250,000 adult Negroes in Jamaica only 22,000 could read or write.[22] It was no better in Trinidad.

The increase in literacy affected the social class structure and this had great economic and political implications in the course of time. The 1940 census further reveals that out of a total black population of 261,485--181,494 could read and write, the percentage of illiteracy being only 9.5; and out of a total mixed or coloured population of 78,775 over 50,000 were literate, the percentage of illiteracy being 8.6.[23] But about half the East Indian population still remained illiterate. With better opportunities for education the middle class ranks were bound to be extended. The middle class, in existence for over a hundred years, was originally composed of the coloured offspring of white planters and merchants. Gradually, persons of entirely Negro ancestry came to take their places in that class, as the avenues for better education and greater economic opportunities were opened to them. And in fact a

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[21] H. V. Wiseman, A Short History of the British West Indies (London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1950), p. 94.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Annual Statistical Digest, No. 5, 1955, loc. cit.

few of them moved into the upper class.

If the middle and upper classes were affected by educational changes so were the members of the lower classes. Many in the generation following World War I had availed themselves of the advantages of technical education and enjoyed higher wages because of their skills. The following table gives an idea of the increase in wages between 1939 and 1943:[24]

Type of Work	Trinidad (cents per hour)			
	1939	1943	Increase	% Increase
Industrial				
General Building				
Skilled	7.0-23.0	11.0-27.0	4.0	17.4-57
Unskilled	9.0-10.0	12.0	2.0-3.0	20-33.0

As the incomes of some of the lower classes improved by virtue of their skills they gradually acquired middle class characteristics and status.

Education and training thus made social mobility somewhat easier. Many West Indians considered them the means to get wealth, status and power. The growth of the middle class was accompanied by demands for constitutional reform in the 1920's. Effective control of the legislature had remained firmly in the hands of white oligarchs for a long time. But

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[24]Caribbean Commission, The Caribbean Islands and the War (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 70.

as the condition of the African element improved their political consciousness was awakened and they demanded a better representative government. Of course the demands from the coloured and black middle and upper class were resisted by The Chamber of Commerce and the Agricultural Society which represented white commercial and industrial interests. They feared the power which a broadly based franchise would place in the hands of the Negro population. But resistance also came from the East Indians. And this is important, for the role of education in political development is clearly illustrated.

Major Wood, Undersecretary of State for the colonies, had been sent out to investigate the demands for representative government in the British West Indies in 1922. He interviewed a group of wealthy and educated East Indians who opposed the introduction of the elective system. This group as well as the East Indian National Congress of Trinidad feared that East Indians would be at a disadvantage if an educational test of the fitness of voters was employed; they therefore favoured the nomination system.

The Legislative Reform Committee, which claimed to represent the rising middle classes and peasants, and the Trinidad Workingmen's Association represented by Captain A. Cipriani, were the leading advocates of representative government. The Reform Committee did not favour any form of communal representation which the East Indians wanted.

That committee held that such a system would only create friction between the different races. Indeed their view was in harmony with that of most West Indians that unity among all races was highly desirable for progress. And education was considered the chief means to bring this about. To this end David Lowenthal wrote:

> Education can be a solvent of social stratification: it weakens caste and color barriers, and it makes achievement rather than origin the main measure of merit.[25]

Major Wood recommended that the number of the unofficial members of the Council be increased from eleven to thirteen, seven of which would be elected and six nominated. While the double vote of the Governor was to be retained to ensure an official majority, he was to be stripped of his special powers to pass essential measures. Mr. Wood, who was himself opposed to communal representation, stated that the retention of the system of nomination would make it possible "to secure representation on the Council of races or important interests not otherwise adequately represented by direct election."[26] These recommendations formed the basis of the new Constitution which was adopted in 1924. Hewan Craig observed:

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[25]David Lowenthal, "The Social Background of West Indian Federation," West Indies Federation, ed. D. Lowenthal (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 89.

[26]Wood Report, p. 27, as quoted by Craig, op. cit., p. 33.

> For the first time in its long history as a crown colony, Trinidad was now to have an elected element in its legislature, a concession which had been withheld until the coloured population had developed sufficiently to take a considerable part in the political life of the colony.[27]

But the people's appetite had only been whetted. Disturbances in the 1930's necessitated further constitutional reform. These disturbances were an expression of dissatisfaction with the representative system by large sections of the working classes. They felt that they were not adequately represented due to the relatively high property qualifications for candidature and the restricted franchise. Candidates for election to the Legislative Council were required to own real estate with values of at least £2500, and only male candidates who could read and write English were eligible. For voters the property or income qualification demanded ownership of property of £12-10 rateable value. Male voters must be over twenty-one, females over thirty years of age, and all must be able to understand spoken English.[28] Under these circumstances only 5.9 per cent of the total population comprised the electorate, and of this 14.8 per cent voted in the first elections held under the new constitution early in 1925. This situation was aggravated by the increase in the cost of living in Trinidad between 1935-1937. The increase had amounted to

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[27] Craig, loc. cit.

[28] Ibid., p. 39.

17 per cent in one area of the oilfields.

The discontent of the working class found expression in the career of Uriah Butler, a Negro from the nearby island of Grenada who came to Trinidad in 1921. He first attracted public notice in 1935 when he organized and led a hunger march to Port-of-Spain, the capital. In January he began a series of speeches militantly advocating better conditions for workers. His activities culminated in the riots of 1937. In 1936, Butler had founded the Citizens' Welfare League, one aim of which was to secure the election to the legislature of a member to represent their views. At that time the only trade Union of any importance was the Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers Union. It is true that Captain A. Cipriani headed the Workingmen's Association, but he had refused to have it registered as a protest against the shortcomings of the 1932 Trade Unions Ordinance. Indeed one of the root causes of the 1937 disturbances was the absence of a recognized machinery for collective bargaining.

A new phase in the development of the labour movement began as the need for trade union organization was more and more dramatized. Early in 1938, the Government created a Labour Department on the advice of the Disturbances Commission, to guide workers in forming trade unions and to ensure proper conciliation between employer and employee. Five of the seven members elected to the Council in January 1938 may be considered representatives of labour in one way

or another. These were Captain A. Cipriani and T. Rooda (leading members of the Working Men's Association, A. C. Rienzi, president of the first major trade union, S. Teelucksing, member for Caroni, and A. Maillard, a coloured man supported by Cipriani's party.[29]

As the representatives of a class agitating for greater political power the labour leaders were highly critical of the government. They opposed the nomination system and complained of the weight of the official majority. They were irked by the constitutional limitations on their powers to secure better conditions for the working classes. None of them sat on the Executive Council and they felt the need for admitting representatives of labour to participate in the formation of policy. Moreover there was need to extend the vote to a class which, notwithstanding the limited franchise, had exhibited political consciousness and ability in electing a majority of labour members to the Legislative Council.

It was clear that the labour members conceived the necessity of combining constitutional reform with social and economic reform. This fact was also recognized by the West India Royal Commission which was appointed to inquire into all aspects of West Indian life in 1938. The full text of the Commission's report was withheld until 1945, although a

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[29] Ibid., p. 137.

statement of their recommendations was published in 1940. The recommendations of the Commission included not only large-scale programmes for social and economic progress, but also measures for widening the franchise and making "the elected element in Legislative Councils . . . as truly representative as possible."[30]

The disturbances in Trinidad were far reaching. Other parts of the West Indies were also similarly affected. It was evident that Crown Colony government had failed to adjust to changing social and economic conditions. New educational opportunities had upset the status quo and brought new classes into economic and political power. Further, constitutional changes were bound to follow. The nominated official members in Trinidad were withdrawn at the end of 1940 and in the following year two more elected members brought the total to nine. The Legislative Council then consisted of eighteen members of whom fifteen were unofficials, six nominated and nine elected. But the Council was still not yet fully representative nor even semi-representative, as the casting vote of the Governor still gave the non-elected element a majority of one.

One other important step was taken at this time. At the end of 1940 membership of the Executive Council was

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[30]Great Britain, Colonial Office, West India Royal Commission, 1938-39, Report, Cmd. 6607 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945), p. 450.

increased from seven to eight with the appointment of Cipriani, the first labour representative to be so honoured. The Governor headed that Council and the initiative for formulating policy still rested with him. When Cipriani resigned from the Executive Council in 1943, he was replaced by Rienzi, the trade union leader and an elected member of the Legislature. These were marked changes. A Franchise Committee was appointed in 1941. It reported in 1944 and recommended the introduction of universal adult suffrage. In this lay the hope of greater fulfillments after the war.

The end of the war saw an increasing interest in education not only at primary and secondary level but also at the college and university level. This was evident from the increasing number of candidates for the University of London Matriculation Examination. In 1945 the number was 58 and in 1946 it was 98. By 1947 the number had increased to 163.[31] Students were coming from a wider social base than in times past. There was growing consciousness that education carried within itself the seeds of economic reward. A new economic class was gradually being created, and political recruitment from this class was bound to have great repercussions later.

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[31] Trinidad and Tobago, Annual Report of the Director of Education, 1947 (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 19.

CHAPTER II

POST-WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENTS

By 1941 therefore, some progress had been made in the direction of elective representation on the Council and the end of official predominance. Gradually the powers of the Governor and his officials lessened, while those of elected members loomed larger and larger. The next decade was to see greater changes along this line. Educational progress would continue to be one of the mainsprings of these developments. The spirit of opposition to imperial powers was strongest in the Port-of-Spain Town Council, and here as Hewan Craig observed education was a very important factor:

> The spirit of independence was more marked in the Port-of-Spain council than the other town councils, both perhaps because it was the oldest municipal body, and because of the importance of Port-of-Spain itself . . . with the largest population and the greatest educational facilities of any town in the island.[1]

Before World War II all areas of education in Trinidad, as in other parts of the British West Indies, remained lamentably poor. Facilities were inadequate and teachers were badly paid. It is true that slight improvements were made from

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[1]Hewan Craig, The Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1952), p. 79.

time to time, as has been already pointed out. Through lack of funds a great deal was left to be done. The Marriott-Mayhew Education Report of 1933, which was a comprehensive survey of education in the British West Indies, was the first of its kind to blame the failure of educational development directly on a weak economy. The report recognized the need for progress in education in terms of West Indian development. The Commissioners were to report among other things on "the relations of education to vocational training, with reference to economic and industrial conditions and professional and domestic needs."[2]

These needs were recognized for some time, but plans for their fulfillment awaited wartime economic development. In 1941 Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, sent a message to the colonial governments outlining British colonial wartime policy. He stated:

> I have spoken of the desirability of laying plans now to make rapid progress possible after the war. I attach particular importance to the training of teachers, health workers, agricultural demonstrators and so on. . . . If financial assistance is required to enable technical training . . . to proceed, I shall be very glad to consider any proposals that you may submit.[3]

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[2]The Marriott-Mayhew Education Report, 1933, Caribbean Quarterly, X (March, 1964), p. 12.

[3]Great Britain, Colonial Office, Despatch from Secretary of States for the Colonies to Colonial Governments Regarding Certain Aspects of Colonial Policy in Wartime (British Guiana, 1941), p. 7.

The war occasioned the swift co-operation of the United Kingdom and the United States in the Caribbean. Both nations were acutely aware of the strategic position of the islands. On March 9, 1940, the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission was formed. The joint communiqué which established the Commission stated that the purpose was to encourage and strengthen social and economic co-operation between the United States and its possessions and the United Kingdom and its colonies.[4] Very close contact was maintained between the two governments in carrying out this purpose. Sir Frank Stockdale, Comptroller of Welfare and Development in the West Indies reported in 1944 that Colonial Development Funds approximating £1,400,000 had been spent in the West Indies and that the United States had agreed to release the sum of $4,000,000.[5] Aid from the United States was well appreciated by West Indian leaders. At the public conference on economic problems in the Caribbean held in New York City on May 1, 1943, Dr. Eric Williams, later to become Chief Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, admitted that "the most important consequences of the war for the British West Indies has been the development of closer relations with the United

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[4]Report of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission to the Governments of the United States and Great Britain for the Years 1942-43 (Washington, 1943), p. 37.

[5]Great Britain, Colonial Office, Development and Welfare in the West Indies, 1943-1944, Report by Sir Frank Stockdale, pp. 22-23.

States."[6]

United States bases in the Caribbean proved a great boon to the economy. On September 2, 1940, Great Britain, in exchange for fifty over-age destroyers, granted the United States the right to lease air and naval bases in Newfoundland and Bermuda and six British West Indian colonies including Jamaica, Trinidad, St. Lucia and Antigua. The American base at Chaguaramas in Trinidad employed a considerable number of people and consequently the government revenue increased. In 1941 agriculture employed 23,026 persons, mining 14,890 and United States bases 20,000. The following year saw 21,195 persons employed in agriculture, 13,996 in mining and 28,000 on United States bases.[7] During these two years the Trinidad Government revenue showed marked improvement. In 1939 the total revenue was $13,421, and increased to $18,930 in 1941 and $23,445 in 1942. Government surpluses for the same years were $420, $2,110, and $2,276 respectively.[8]

Grants from the metropolitan powers were used to subsidize industries and this resulted in an improvement of

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[6]Latin American Institute, Economic Problems of the Caribbean Area. Speeches, addresses and abstract papers delivered at the Public Conference held in New York City jointly with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, May 1, 1943, p. 20.

[7]Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Digest, No. 3, 1953 (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 31.

[8]Ibid., p. 130.

the export trade. The value of export was $46,192 in 1940, $47,296 in 1941 and $47,129 in 1942.[9] Production of certain strategic materials was also encouraged by the war demand. Trinidad joined the other Caribbean islands in providing a substantial supply of certain foods to the United Nations and became "a vital source of strategic materials including alcohol, beauxite, hides, copper, cotton, manganese, petroleum and rubber."[10] As industries multiplied wages also increased and the addition to government revenue from tax returns corresponded. The total tax returns for Trinidad in 1940, 1941 and 1942 were $4,548, $4,889 and $5,701 respectively. By 1945 the total had increased to $8,947.[11] Improvement in the standard of living in Trinidad is also evident from the income tax payable by standard family unit. This was $10.80 in 1941, and $57.60 from 1942 to 1947.[12]

By the end of the war, therefore, the economy had considerably improved. Economic improvement was matched by educational progress. Not only were more schools built to accommodate the pressing demand for education from a growing population, but the government was able to engage in a

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[9] Ibid., p. 151.

[10] Caribbean Commission, The Caribbean Islands and the War (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 11.

[11] Annual Statistical Digest, No. 4, 1954, op. cit., p. 141.

[12] Ibid.

greater training programme for teachers. Student-teachers in training numbered 139 in 1939, 145 in 1941 and 1942 and 157 in 1946.[13] In his 1942 report the Director of Education in Trinidad noted that increase of 1377 in the enrollment of pupils in Secondary and Private Schools was partly attributable to "the increased demand for secondary education, but also to the fact that due to the demand for labour in connection with the construction of the U. S. bases, more money is in circulation."[14] Demand for education seemed, therefore, to go hand in hand with economic betterment.

As the condition of the people improved they became more and more politically conscious. People were not satisfied with concessions that were made, and looked forward to self-government. In 1943, Colonel Oliver Stanley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, hinted that a firm social and economic foundation was essential to self-government:

> I want to see the colonies with an adequate and sound economic basis which will meet the needs of Government and peoples and provide a reasonable standard of life. Unless we can do that, talk about self-government is really humbug. Political responsibility goes ill with financial dependence.[15]

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[13] Annual Statistical Digest, No. 3, 1953, op. cit., p. 67.

[14] Trinidad and Tobago, Education, Administration Report of the Director of Education for the Year 1942 (Port-of Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 4.

[15] As quoted by Thomas Simey, Welfare and Planning in the West Indies (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 124.

But more than mere financial improvement was necessary. It was important that there be a better distribution of wealth. And this was happening, although not without conflict between industry and labour. In 1941 there were twenty-three stoppages of work involving 10,865 men in Trinidad.[16] As the economic base broadened the desire to share political responsibility with the ruling class was voiced more and more by the middle and working classes.

One of the reasons why the British Government ignored demands for representative government for Trinidad in the nineteenth century was because it feared that if it relinquished direct control it would have encouraged the rule of a small wealthy class. It is significant that a similar attitude was taken in the 1920's with regard to the granting of responsible government. In his report, Major Wood stated:

> The only effect of granting responsible government might be to entrench in power a financial oligarchy which would entirely dominate the Colony and use their power for the sole purpose of benefiting one class instead of the community as a whole.[17]

An enlarged and improved educational system was gradually making responsible government and eventual independence possible.

Adult suffrage was attained in Trinidad in 1945,

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[16] Annual Statistical Digest, No. 11, 1961, op. cit., p. 53.

[17] Wood Report, 1922, p. 7, as quoted by Craig, op. cit., p. 30.

when the recommendations of the Franchise Committee were adopted in a new constitution. Women became eligible for membership of the Legislature. The residential qualifications for candidates for election to the Legislative Council were removed and the income qualifications reduced. The East Indians successfully opposed the retention of the ability to understand English as one of the qualifications of the vote and this was waived. The granting of universal adult suffrage increased the percentage of registered voters to 46 per cent. Jamaica had 52 per cent. In both Trinidad and Jamaica a substantial percentage of the electorate went to the polls in the 1946 elections--in Jamaica 58.7 per cent, in Trinidad 52.9 per cent. People were becoming aware of their political responsibility.

The composition of the legislature under the 1945 constitution was identical to that of 1941. The Governor remained president with three ex-officio members, six nominated unofficial members and nine elected members. A majority of one was still secured to the non-elective side by the Governor's casting vote, so that even if a single party had won all nine elective seats its representatives would still not have full power for implementing their desired policy. It was clear, however, that the granting of adult suffrage would necessitate further constitutional changes. For the extension of the franchise had resulted in the increase of the government's opponents in the legislature.

These members of the opposition fought against the constitutional limitations on the powers of the elected members, which made it impossible for them to secure a majority on any measure without official or nominated support. Moreover, representation was deemed inadequate. With a population of 557,970 there was only one elected member to approximately 62,000 people, a ratio which did not compare favourably with Jamaica or British Guiana. In Jamaica there was one representative to 38,660 persons and in British Guiana one to 26,050.

Within a year of the first elections to be held under the new franchise, a resolution was adopted by the legislature for the appointment of a committee to consider constitutional reform. One of the members of that committee was Dr. Patrick Solomon, outstanding and most dynamic member of the West Indian National Party and founder of the short-lived Caribbean Socialist Party. He submitted a minority report recommending that both the Legislative and Executive Councils should be elective. While Dr. Solomon's requests were not accepted they reveal the political awareness of the times and the trend of constitutional development in Trinidad.

Important changes took place under the constitution of 1950, and these were largely effected in the Executive Council. The number of that council was reduced. In addition to the Governor and three ex-officio members, there was now only one nominated member and five elected members. The

former Executive Council could only be summoned on the authority of the Governor, but after 1950 this rested with the written request of five of its members. And while the Governor still possessed a casting vote, in a Council of nine this could only happen if the absence of one or more members resulted in an even number present. The Executive Council was partly responsible to the Legislature.

This new constitutional development was important in its consequences not only to Trinidad but to the British West Indies in general. In putting forward its proposals for a federal constitution for the West Indies, the British Caribbean Standing Closer Association Committee recommended that Trinidad should become the federal capital. The Committee considered it desirable that Trinidad should enjoy a representation second only to that of Jamaica in the House of Assembly, the elective chamber of the proposed bicameral federal legislature.

The struggle for self-government soon expressed itself in a desire for federation and eventual independence of the British West Indies. Forces for integration of the territories had been at work for some time. The Development and Welfare Organization, inter-island communications by sea and air, inter-island trade and regional economic co-operation helped develop close ties. It was not until after World War II, however, when substantial educational, economic and political progress had been made that the British

encouraged federation. In 1922 Major Wood, though impressed with the advantages of greater unity, felt that it was both inopportune and impracticable at that time. The West India Royal Commission of 1939 also doubted whether the time was yet ripe for introducing any large measure of federation. However, the British government was convinced by the dramatic change in West Indian political climate during the 1940's and gave its support to federation.

After the war the developments toward federation and independence were rapid ones. A Conference was held at Montego Bay, Jamaica in 1947. The principle of a loose federation was accepted by most of the colonies. This was followed by the London Conferences in April, 1953. A revised plan for a British Caribbean Federation was drawn up and this was later endorsed by the separate territories. A second London Conference was held in 1956 after which the British Parliament passed the British Caribbean Federation Act. The Conference had reported on February 23, which date was celebrated in the West Indies as Federation Day. Other preliminaries were completed during the early months of 1958. In March of that year the first federal elections took place. Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados was chosen Federal Prime Minister and a cabinet and senate were appointed. The Federal Parliament was opened in April, 1958, by Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret. Federation was a reality at last. The West Indies was born.

But the Federation was not to survive and eventual independence in the British West Indies was not to be achieved by that means. The selection of Trinidad as the capital together with other petty jealousies and the problem of insularity soon wrecked the whole structure. Moreover, the new People's National Movement in Trinidad, which was headed by Dr. Eric Williams, was primarily nationalist and non-socialist and had not allied itself with the Caribbean Federal Labour Party. Of that party, Morley Ayearst wrote:

> Its part in federal politics in the future is still problematical, but unquestionably its representatives will support all moves toward the rapid achievement of Dominion status.[18]

The federation collapsed in May, 1962 at the time when independence was soon to be granted. Jamaica was the first to secede, the government having agreed to a referendum to settle the question of the future of that island's relation to the Federation. The Opposition won by a small margin. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago then held that the secession of one territory meant the breakup of the federation. The Federation was subsequently dissolved by an Act of Parliament. Notwithstanding this fiasco the goal of independence was by no means lost sight of. Jamaica was the first island in the British West Indies to gain independence in 1962. Trinidad followed next.

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[18] Morley Ayearst, "Political Aspects of Federation" in Social and Economic Studies, ed. H. D. Huggins, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Jamaica, 1957), p. 257.

The forces generating political consciousness in Trinidad were at work and had indeed been accelerated. Education was the main factor in this development. According to James Coleman, "political capacity is manifestly dependent upon modern education," and "education is therefore the main, if not the sole, key to political mobility into elite status."[19] And this is important. Education gradually created a new political elite and enlightened the masses in Trinidad. For the leaders of the movement for self-government, Cipriani, Rienzi, Butler, Solomon and Williams were products of education representing the people.

Indeed there was continued progress as the government promoted education of all kinds and at all levels. In the post-war years emphasis was placed on vocational education as well as on general education. Adult education also proceeded apace. In his annual report of 1947, the Director of Education in Trinidad stated that the general aim of the adult classes was "to provide the type of instruction that would equip certain sections of the adult population for the duties and responsibilities of intelligent citizenship."[20] At the end of that year there were sixteen adult education centres. That progress toward greater literacy was being

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[19] Education and Political Development, ed. James S. Coleman (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 16 and 26.

[20] Annual Report of the Director of Education, 1947, op. cit., p. 23.

achieved is evident from the gradual reduction of these centres. There were fourteen centres in 1955 and twelve in 1956.[21] Technical education also advanced. The San Fernando Technical Institute was established in September, 1954. In 1956 there were 180 boys enrolled, an increase of forty-nine over the figure for 1955.[22] The boys entered industry as apprentices after completing the three-year course. In an indirect way, therefore, industry was fostered.

The Government's concern for industrial development and economic progress also led to another avenue of education in the form of advice. Of this Dr. Eric Williams wrote:

> The increasing control by the elected representatives of the people of Trinidad and Tobago over their own . . . economic affairs, in anticipation of their control of external affairs with independence, has been nowhere better reflected than in the broad scope of the expert advice which the Government has been able to make available to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.[23]

Experts had been called in from the United States, Canada, India and the United Nations to give ~~(expert)~~ advice in the fields of oil, income tax and legal drafting, housing,

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[21] Great Britain, Colonial Office, Colonial Reports, Trinidad and Tobago, 1956 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959), p. 61.

[22] Ibid., p. 60.

[23] Eric Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: PNM Publishing Co., Ltd., 1962), p. 248.

planning, port development, vocational education, agricultural marketing, and railway operations. "The results of this expansion," continued Dr. Williams, "have been twofold. . . . The political stability and the economic potential of Trinidad and Tobago have been recognized."[24] Secondly, the people could at last enjoy learned leisure as well as liberal and scientific intercourse.[25]

Educational and economic progress continued to be matched by political and constitutional developments. Party politics had been a sad lack in Trinidad affairs. The constitution of 1950 as Sir Hubert Rance, Secretary of State for the Colonies correctly observed, gave the people of Trinidad "a dominant voice" in the control of their own affairs.[26] But the Secretary of State also warned that further progress in the development of political parties was imperative if the people were to make full use of the authority given to them by the constitution. Hitherto, there was no effective party system. It is true that the West Indian National Party was formed in 1943, and Uriah Butler had organized a party known as the British Empire Workers, Peasants and Ratepayers Union, but these did not last. Butler's party suffered constant internal strife.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Dispatch No. 10 of 7 January 1949, as quoted by Craig, op. cit., p. 172.

It was not until January, 1956, when the People's National Movement was formed that the first manifestations of Party politics on a national scale were seen. That party's chairman was Learie Constantine, with Dr. Eric Williams as Political Leader and Dr. Patrick Solomon as Deputy Political Leader. The Party won thirteen out of twenty-four seats in the General Election of September 24, 1956, and became the first Party Government in Trinidad and Tobago. The party's written constitution provided for the setting up of Party Groups all over Trinidad, and from the beginning emphasis was placed on the promotion and maintenance of discipline. The Party had three platform objectives, the political education of the people, morality in public affairs, and nationhood.

It is significant that the political education of the people constituted the Party's first plank. This was a direct attempt to arouse the people's political consciousness and to prepare them for political responsibility. Political centres were organized throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Williams wrote:

> The political education dispensed to the population in these centres of political learning was of a high order and concentrated placing Trinidad and Tobago within the current of the great international movements for democracy and self-government.[27]

The people gained a better understanding of their problems

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[27]Williams, op. cit., p. 244.

in the context of Athenian democracy or the federalism of the United States. The great nationalist movements, of Nehru in India, of Nkrumah in Ghana, and of others in their struggle for independence were kept before them. For that was their goal too.

The first great achievement of the People's National Movement toward independence was the abolition of the Crown Colony system. Immediately after its victory in the 1956 Elections, it requested the Colonial Office to modify the nomination system by including two of its members among the five nominated members. The British Government in accordance with precedents previously set in Malaya and Singapore, agreed. This step was accompanied by the introduction of the Cabinet system in 1959. The Premier presided over the Cabinet, the Governor having ceased to be a member, while the ex-officio members, who were kept for the sake of continuity and for their experience could no longer vote. The next big step was full internal self-government which was attained after the second victory of the People's National Movement in the General Elections of December, 1961. A bicameral legislature consisting of a fully elected Lower House and a fully nominated Upper House was then introduced.

Finance was given special attention by the People's National Movement. The pay-as-you-earn plan was introduced into the income tax system. Local savings were used for developing local resources. A central bank was created.

Financial autonomy was facilitated by the establishment of a Minister of Finance in 1956.[28] Formerly, financial matters rested with the approval of the British Colonial Office. When, therefore, independence came, the Government and People of Trinidad were in a favourable position to receive it and to benefit from it. Independence was granted on August 31, 1962. The nation of Trinidad was born.

After independence the Trinidad Government lost no time in continuing its plans for national life along sound economic lines. Since 1957 a five-year plan of development was laid down in which $191 million was to be used for the extension of roads, expansion of the airport and electricity, construction of hotels, increasing hospital accommodation and building new schools, among others. By 1962 increasing costs forced the amount for the five-year programme up to $225.5 million.[29] New neglected markets were to be organized and the fishing industry long neglected and ignored was to receive particular attention.

Nor was education to be ignored. New additions were to be made to the Mausica Teachers' College, the John S.

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[28]Trinidad and Tobago, Report to the Honourable the Premier by the Honourable Ulric Lee on the Re-organization of the Public Service (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 58.

[29]Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Five-year Development Programme, 1958-1962 (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 7.

Donaldson Technical Institute, a large number of Primary and Secondary schools would be built and free secondary education was to be introduced. For surely the Government and people must have come to the stern realization that education lay at the heart of all their economic and political progress.

CONCLUSION

It is often said that education is the chief determinant of economic growth, and that economic growth is indispensable for creating the minimal essential conditions for political development. It is true that there are other agencies and processes involved in the formation of political culture, in the recruitment of political elites, and in inculcating a sense of national identity and unity. But the role of education should not be minimized.

In the past a small white upper class ruled in Trinidad as in the other British West Indian colonies. This elite naturally looked to England for leadership. With the coming to power of a coloured and black middle class the picture began to change. This class had become exposed to better educational opportunities and gradually improved their economic position. The new economic class soon became dissatisfied with the political and constitutional establishment. They demanded a change. Their voices were heard. Progress was slow at first and then developments were rapid. At times it seems that progress has been even more rapid than was originally anticipated. A little over half-a-century before Trinidad became independent British colonials felt strongly that the Crown Colony system was the only form of

government that suited Trinidad.

A strong feeling of nationalism had set in in Trinidad after 1950. This was true even of the East Indians who were no doubt stimulated by India's achievement of independence. As people became more educated and the standard of living rose demands grew louder for self-government and independence. The gaining of independence must be considered a remarkable achievement for Trinidad when its varied population is taken into account. For Trinidad is the most cosmopolitan of the islands in the West Indies. In addition to the African element which constitutes the bulk of the population, there are English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Syrians, Lebanese, Chinese, Jews and East Indians.

This fundamental underlying unity of the society of Trinidad and Tobago must be maintained. This is even more important now since independence has been accomplished. The people must now work together to build a better Trinidad. And in order to do this effectively they must continue to cherish those educational, economic and political institutions which have channelled their success thus far. This is the great challenge. In this ~~lay~~ lies their hope for a brighter future.

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